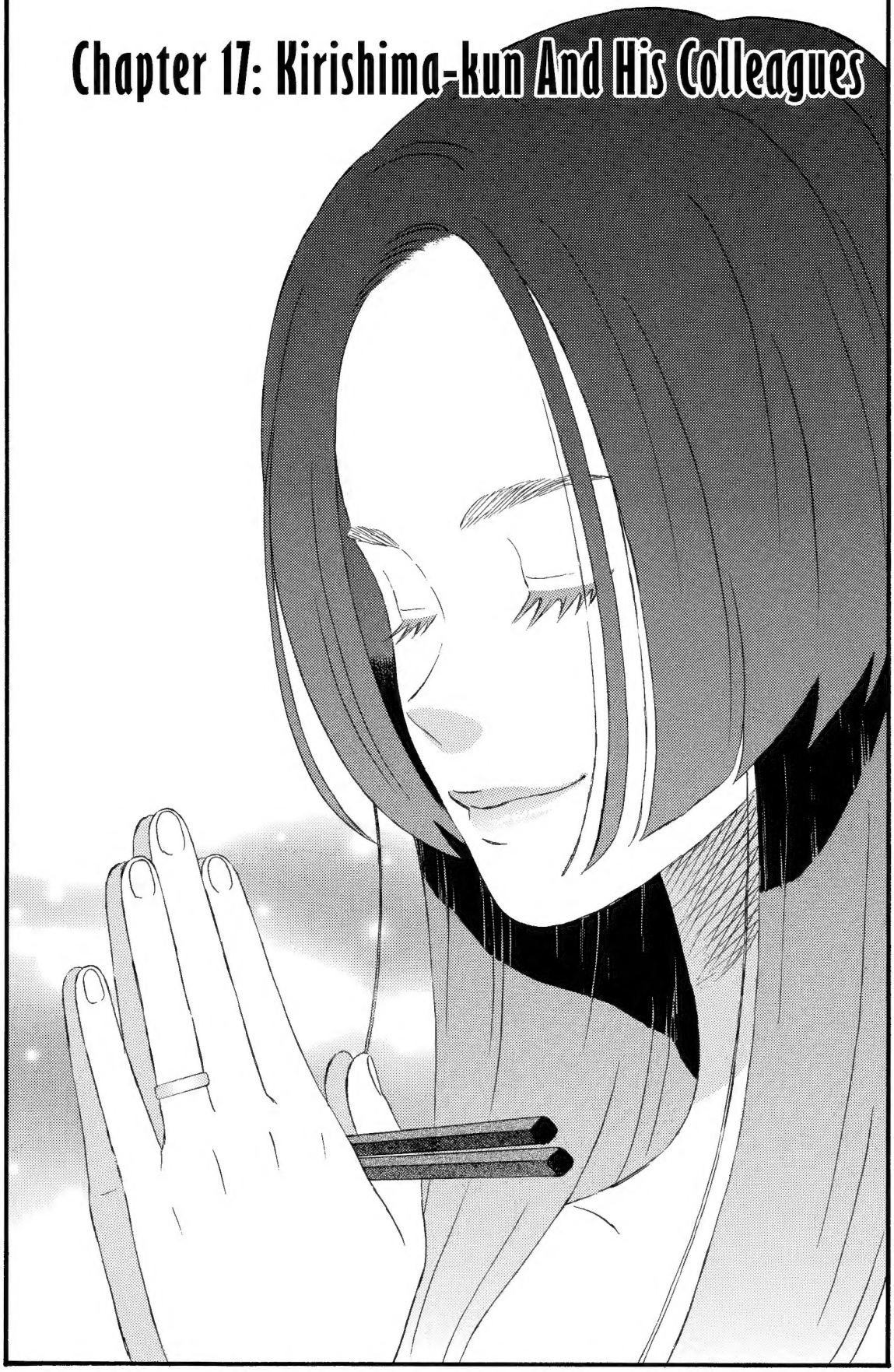
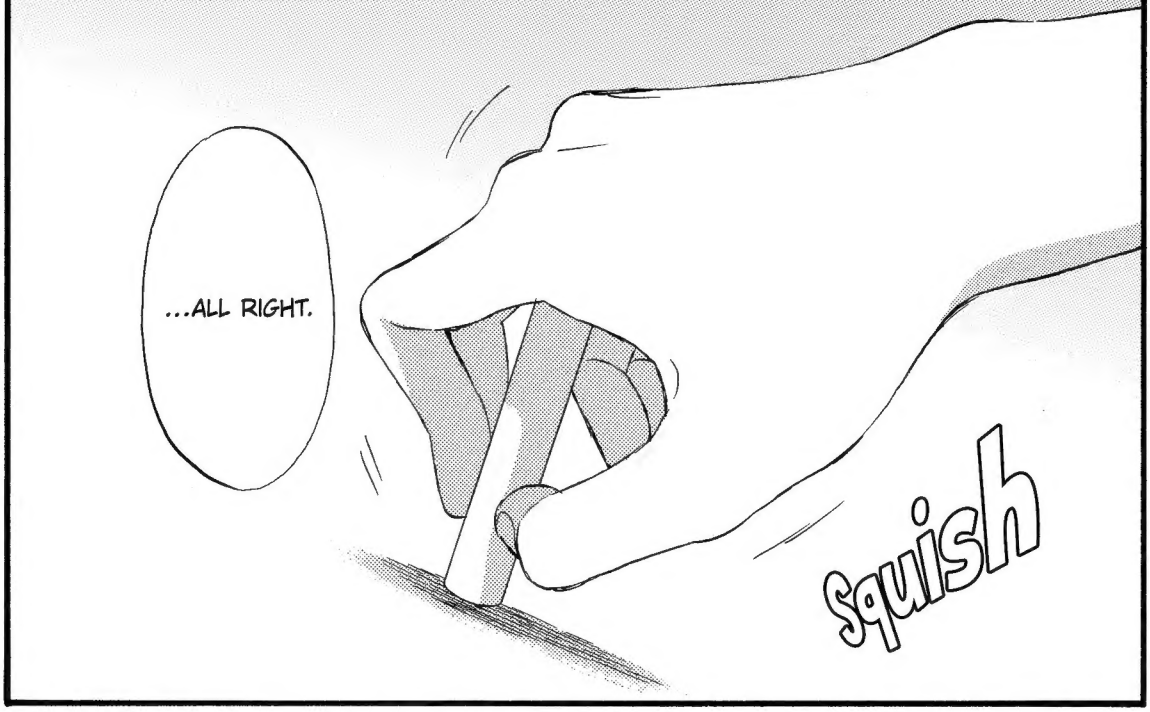
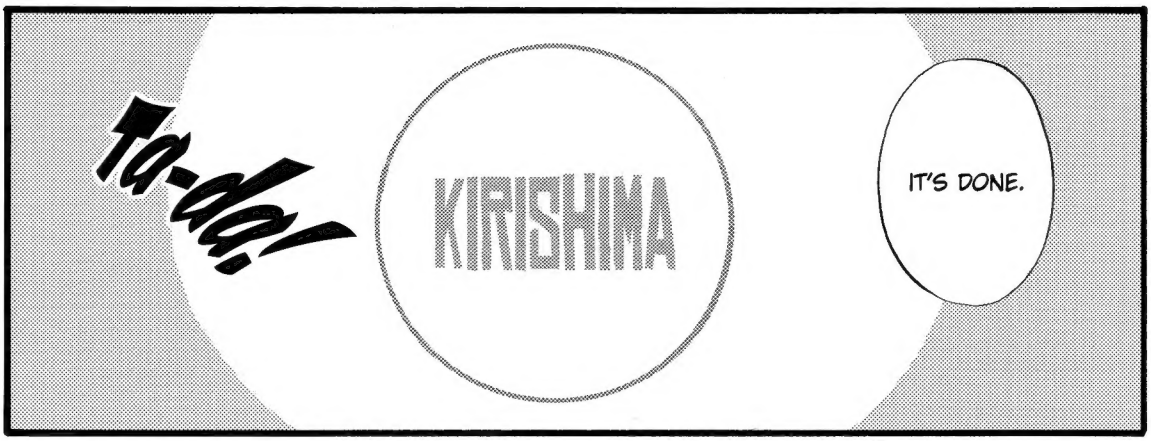
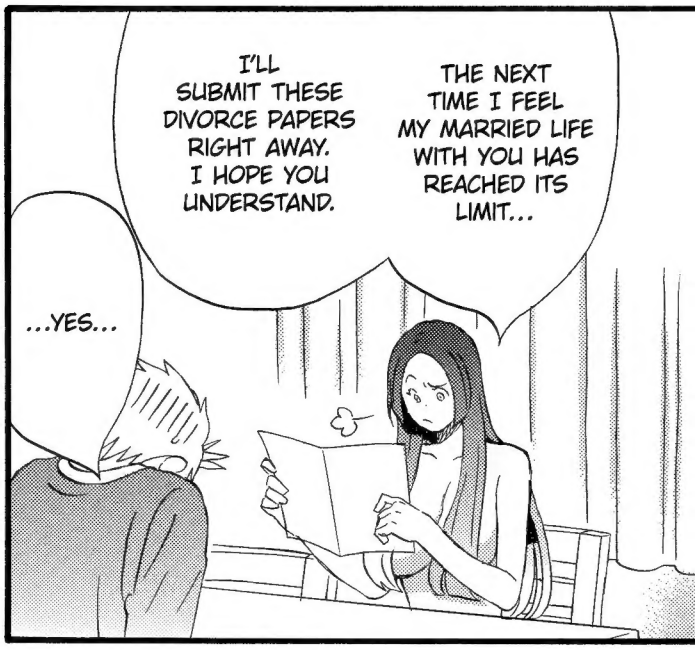
Chapter 17: Kirishima-kun And His Colleagues

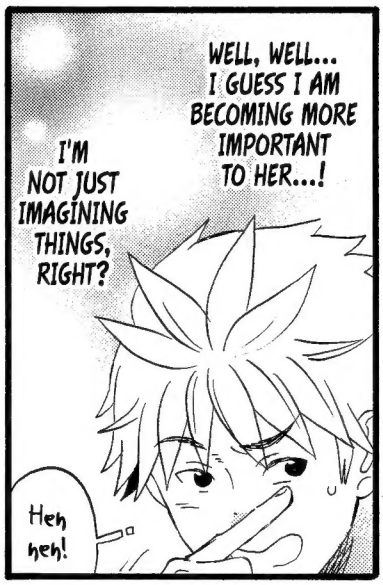



...ALL RIGHT.
squish

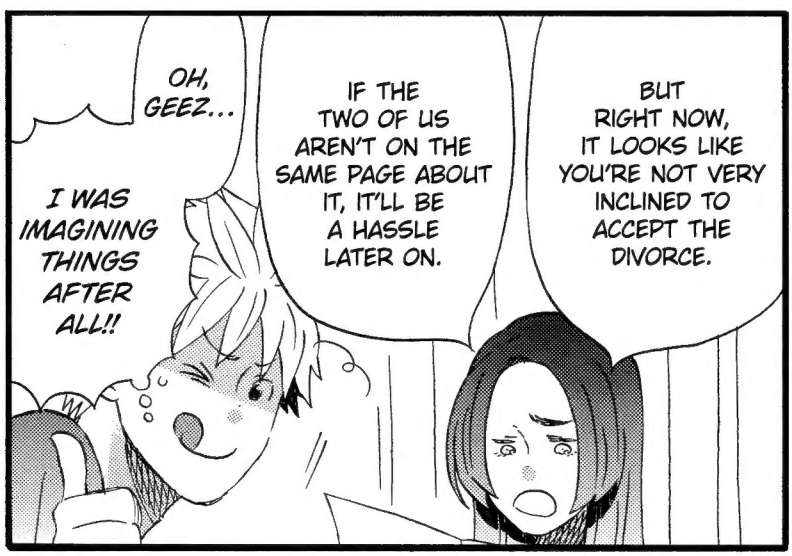

Ta-da!
KIRISHIMA
IT'S DONE.

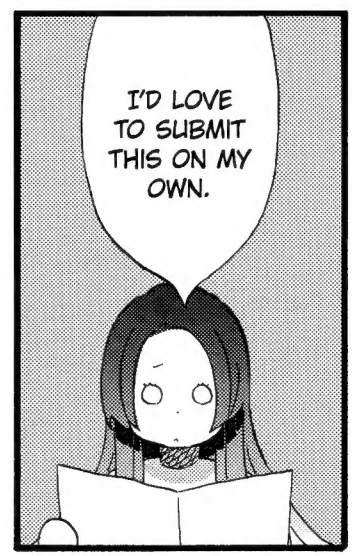
ISHIMURA-SAN SURE IS FULL OF LANDMINES. IT'S HARD TO PREDICT WHAT WILL SET HER OFF.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I HAD TO SIGN THE DIVORCE PAPERS JUST BECAUSE I INVITED A FEW FRIENDS OVER...
...THAT BEING SAID...

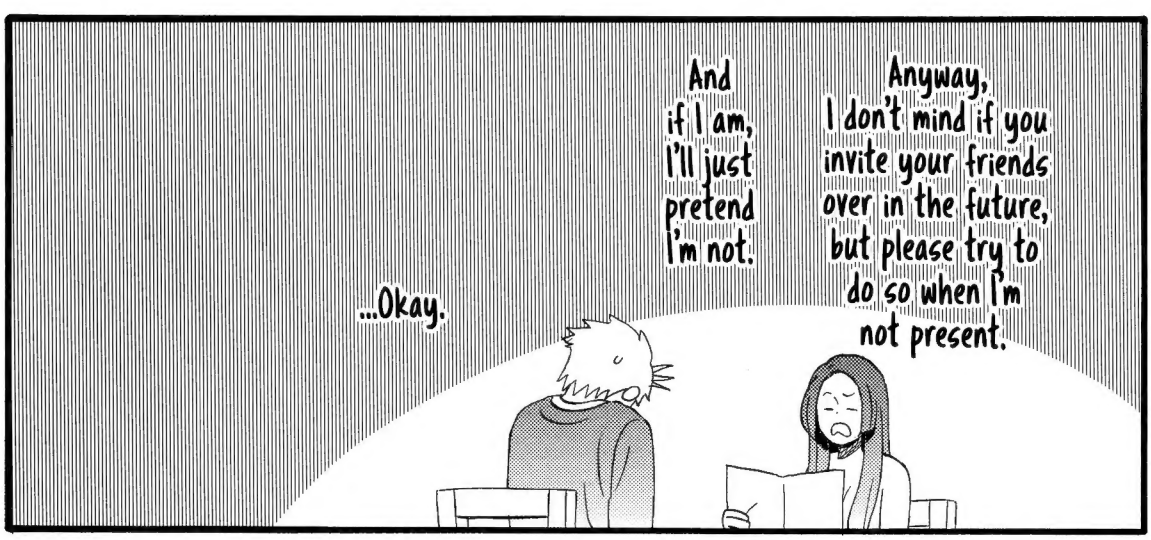

I'LL SUBMIT THESE DIVORCE PAPERS RIGHT AWAY. I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND.
THE NEXT TIME I FEEL MY MARRIED LIFE WITH YOU HAS REACHED ITS LIMIT...
...YES...

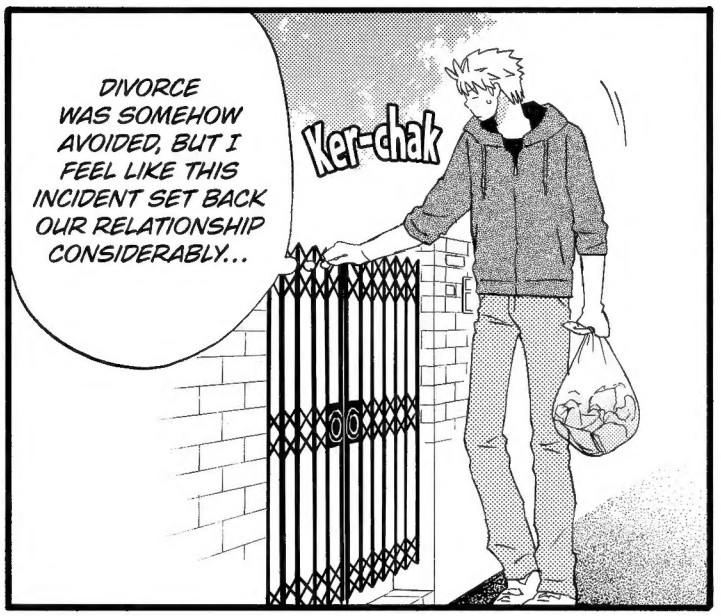

WELL, WELL... I GUESS I AM BECOMING MORE IMPORTANT TO HER...!
I'M NOT JUST IMAGINING THINGS, RIGHT?
Heh heh!

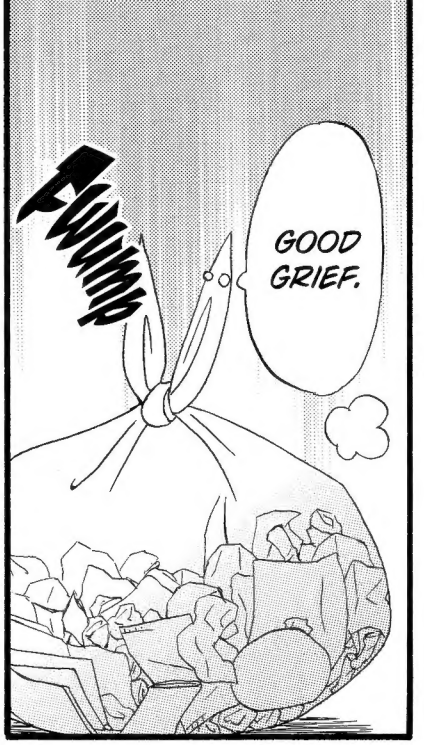
WHEN WE FIRST MET, YOU FILLED IN THE MARRIAGE FORM ON THE SPOT AND QUICKLY SUBMITTED IT WITHOUT MY CONSENT...
BUT FOR THE DIVORCE PAPERS YOU'RE NOT DOING THE SAME THING...
...

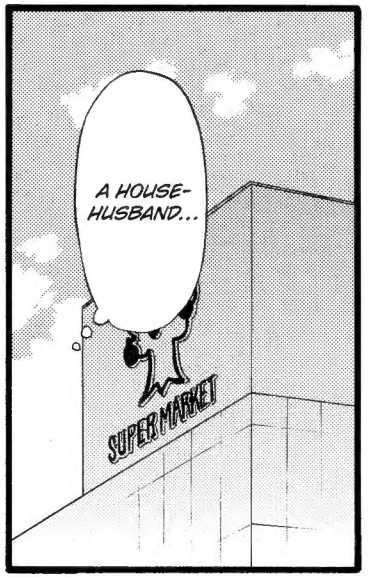

BUT RIGHT NOW, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE NOT VERY INCLINED TO ACCEPT THE DIVORCE.
IF THE TWO OF US AREN'T ON THE SAME PAGE ABOUT IT, IT'LL BE A HASSLE LATER ON.
OH, GEEZ...
I WAS IMAGINING THINGS AFTER ALL!!

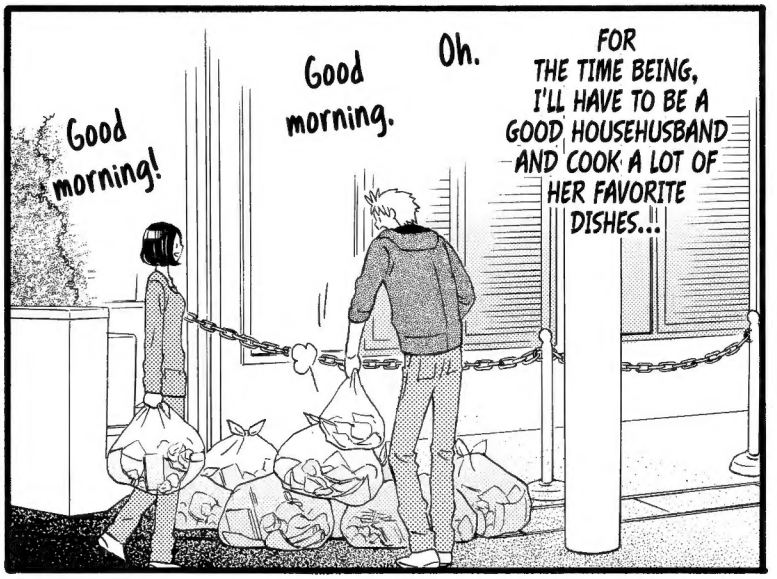

I'D LOVE TO SUBMIT THIS ON MY OWN.


Anyway, I don't mind if you invite your friends over in the future, but please try to do so when I'm not present.
And if I am, I'll just pretend I'm not.
...Okay.


DIVORCE WAS SOMEHOW AVOIDED, BUT I FEEL LIKE THIS INCIDENT SET BACK OUR RELATIONSHIP CONSIDERABLY...
Ker-chak


Fwump
GOOD GRIEF.


A HOUSE-HUSBAND...
SUPERMARKET


Good morning!
Good morning.
Oh.
FOR THE TIME BEING, I'LL HAVE TO BE A GOOD HOUSEHUSBAND AND COOK A LOT OF HER FAVORITE DISHES...

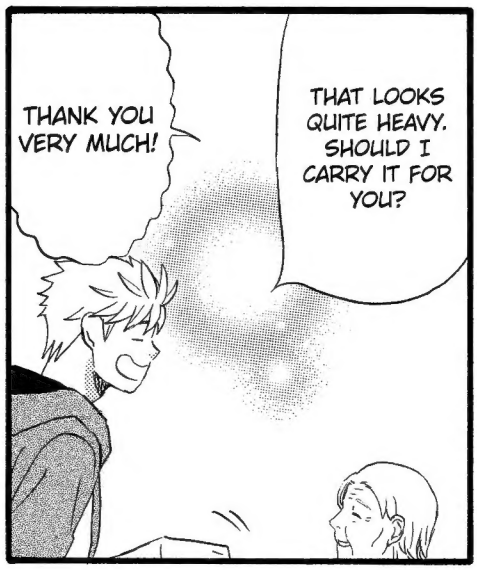
BUT I HAVE TO ADMIT. IT'S A LITTLE LONELY NOT HAVING COWORKERS LIKE BACK AT THE OFFICE.
WITH SO MUCH WORK TO DO, I NOW REALIZE IT'S JUST LIKE ANY OTHER JOB...
I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HOUSEHUSBANDS WERE NOTHING MORE THAN NEETS, BUT...

FINDING OTHER HOUSEHUSBANDS TO TALK TO IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.
I DO RECALL RECEIVING ALL SORTS OF SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE ABOUT MY WORK DURING THAT TIME...
Rustle
Rustle

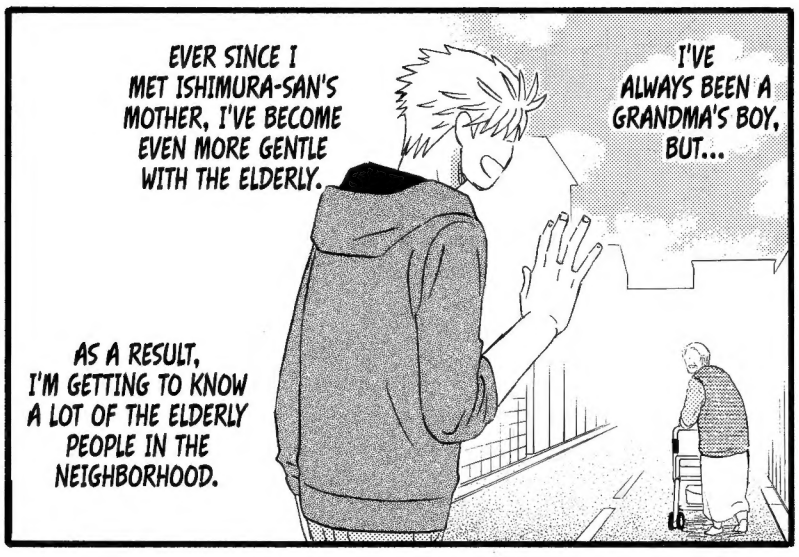
THEN AGAIN, I HADN'T REALLY FORMED CLOSE BONDS WITH ANYONE THERE, BE THEY COLLEAGUES, SENPAIS, OR SUPERIORS.
WE ONLY GOT TOGETHER AT THE COMPANY'S DRINKING PARTIES AND HONESTLY, IT WAS A PAIN.

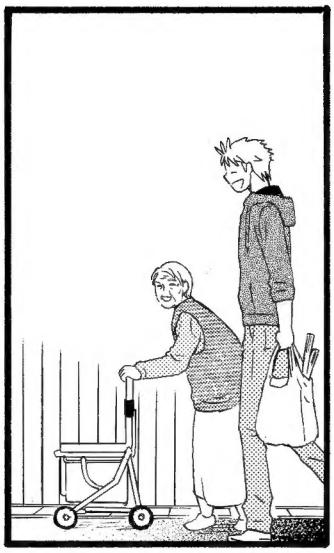
OH, DEAR...
Roll
Roll
Roll
OH! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

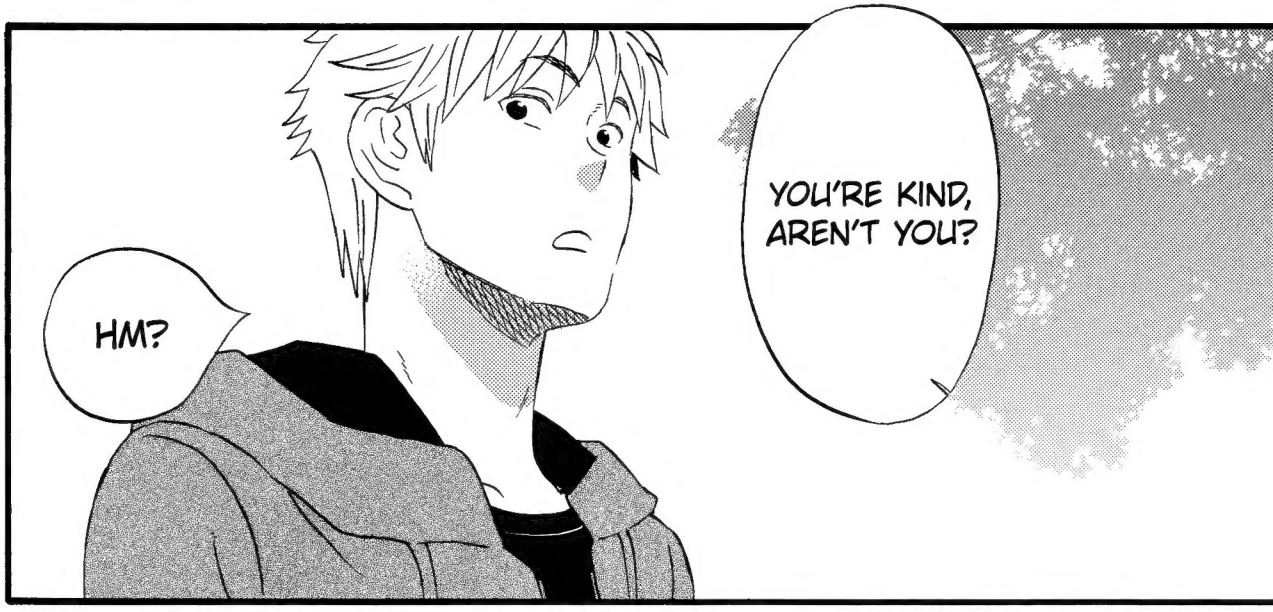
Drop
OH!


THAT LOOKS QUITE HEAVY. SHOULD I CARRY IT FOR YOU?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

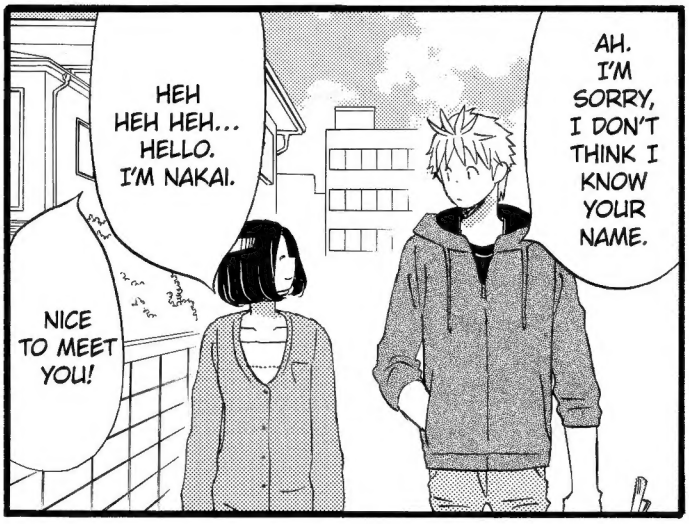
I'LL PICK IT UP.
WHY, THANK YOU.
IT'S NOTHING...


EVER SINCE I MET ISHIMURA-SAN'S MOTHER, I'VE BECOME EVEN MORE GENTLE WITH THE ELDERLY.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A GRANDMA'S BOY, BUT...
AS A RESULT, I'M GETTING TO KNOW A LOT OF THE ELDERLY PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.




YOU'RE KIND, AREN'T YOU?
HM?

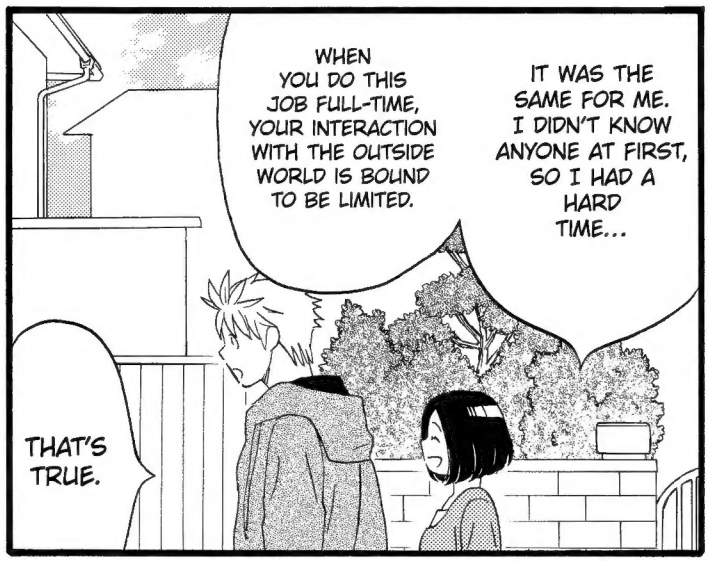
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU'VE BEEN LIVING HERE FOR A WHILE NOW.
Step
Step

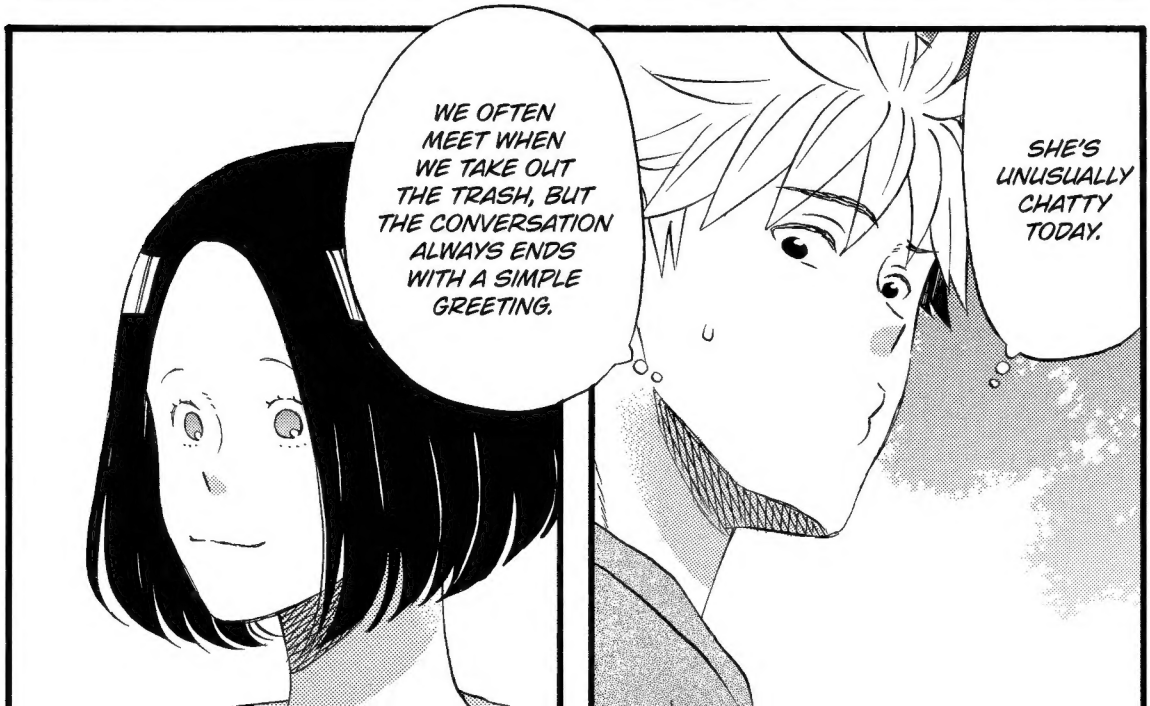

HEH HEH HEH... HELLO. I'M NAKAI.
AH. I'M SORRY, I DON'T THINK I KNOW YOUR NAME.
NICE TO MEET YOU!

I'M SURE THERE ARE GOOD PLACES TO VISIT, BUT I HAVEN'T HAD THE OPPORTUNITY YET.
THOUGH I HAVEN'T EXPLORED MUCH, APART FROM THE SUPERMARKET AND A FEW STORES.
I see...
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS OR ACQUAINTANCES AROUND THESE PARTS, RIGHT?

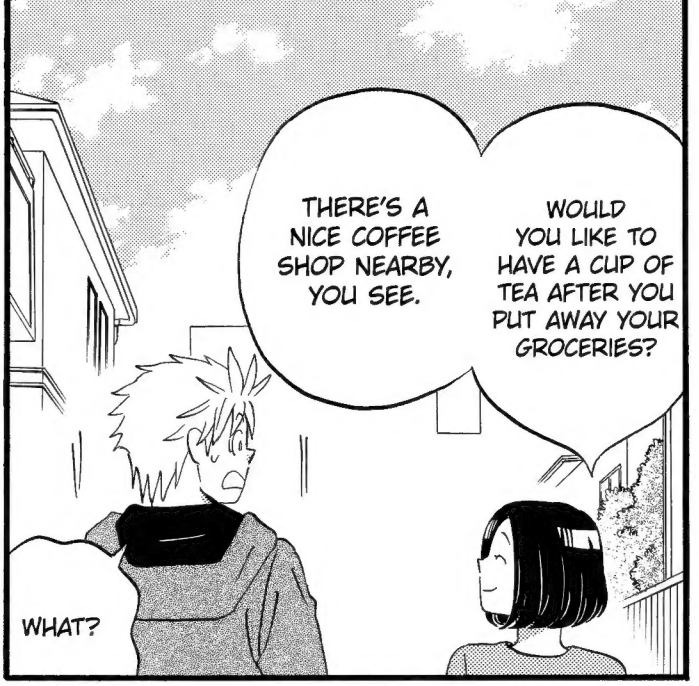
HAVE YOU GOTTEN USED TO LIFE AROUND THESE PARTS?
HM?
WELL... A LITTLE BIT, YES.

...
...
Step
Step
Step

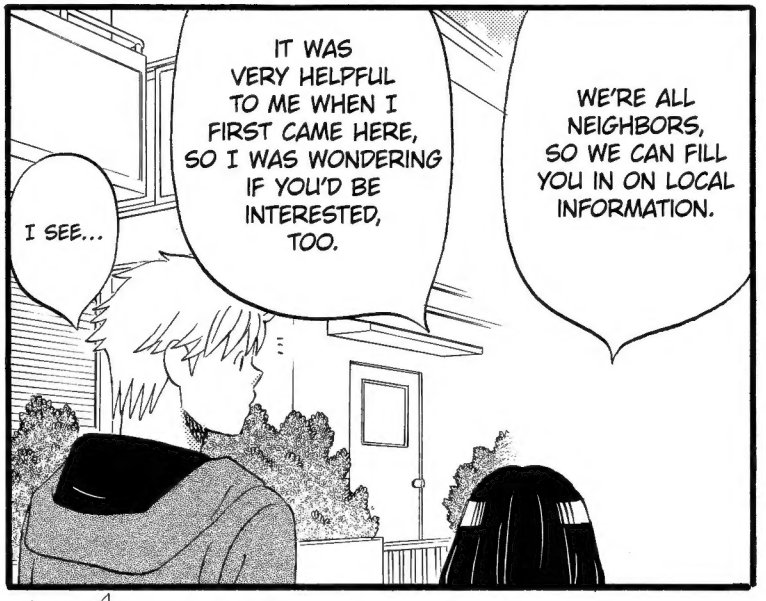

WHEN YOU DO THIS JOB FULL-TIME, YOUR INTERACTION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS BOUND TO BE LIMITED.
IT WAS THE SAME FOR ME. I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE AT FIRST, SO I HAD A HARD TIME...
THAT'S TRUE.


WE OFTEN MEET WHEN WE TAKE OUT THE TRASH, BUT THE CONVERSATION ALWAYS ENDS WITH A SIMPLE GREETING.
SHE'S UNUSUALLY CHATTY TODAY.

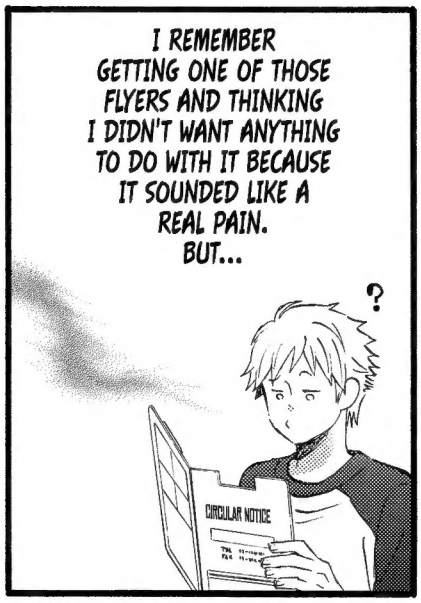
IT WON'T BE JUST US. MY FELLOW HOUSEWIFE FRIENDS WILL ALSO BE THERE.
ME AND... YOU, NAKAI-SAN?


THERE'S A NICE COFFEE SHOP NEARBY, YOU SEE.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE A CUP OF TEA AFTER YOU PUT AWAY YOUR GROCERIES?
WHAT?

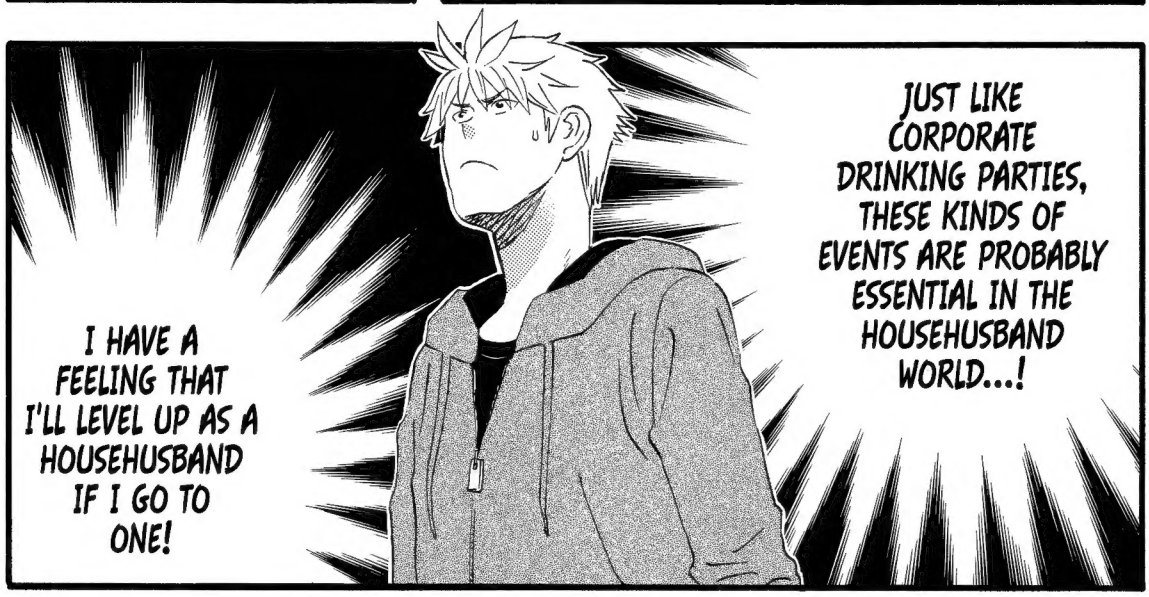
HOLD ON. ISN'T THIS SIMILAR TO THE COMPANY'S DRINKING PARTIES?


I SEE...
IT WAS VERY HELPFUL TO ME WHEN I FIRST CAME HERE, SO I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D BE INTERESTED, TOO.
WE'RE ALL NEIGHBORS, SO WE CAN FILL YOU IN ON LOCAL INFORMATION.

IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO ACCEPT HER INVITATION, ISN'T IT...?
THEY ALWAYS FELT LIKE A PAIN, SO I NEVER WENT TO THEM WILLINGLY.
BUT I'M NO LONGER THE PERSON I USED TO BE. THIS MIGHT BE A CHANCE TO GET THE INFORMATION I NEED TO BECOME A BETTER HOUSEHUSBAND...


I REMEMBER GETTING ONE OF THOSE FLYERS AND THINKING I DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT BECAUSE IT SOUNDED LIKE A REAL PAIN. BUT...
?
CIRCULAR NOTICE

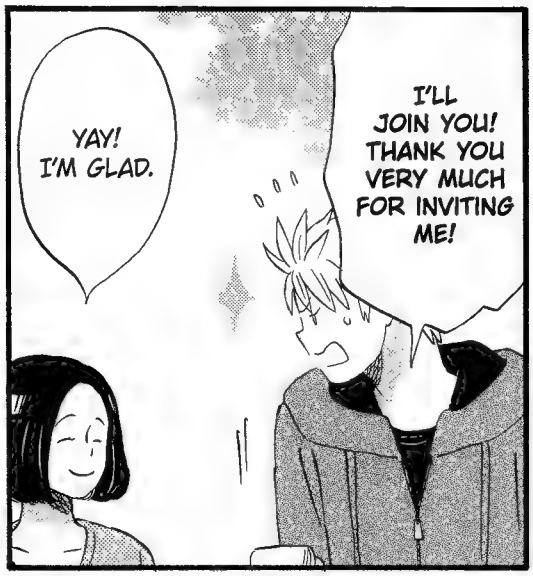
INVITING HOUSEWIVES TO TEA PARTIES WHERE THEY COULD GOSSIP ALL THEY WANT.
THIS IS LIKE THOSE CIRCULAR NOTICES DISTRIBUTED AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD...
CIRCULAR NOT
TEL
FAX


I HAVE A FEELING THAT I'LL LEVEL UP AS A HOUSEHUSBAND IF I GO TO ONE!
JUST LIKE CORPORATE DRINKING PARTIES, THESE KINDS OF EVENTS ARE PROBABLY ESSENTIAL IN THE HOUSEHUSBAND WORLD...!

...ALL RIGHT.
Clench

BESIDES, I MUST IMPROVE MY RELATIONSHIP WITH ISHIMURA-SAN.
I NEED TO STEP UP AND BECOME A CAPABLE HOUSEHUSBAND!

WE'LL SIT IN THE BACK. SEE YOU LATER!
OH. BY THE WAY, THE COFFEE SHOP IS OVER THERE.
Oh!
SURE.


YAY! I'M GLAD.
I'LL JOIN YOU! THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR INVITING ME!

ALL RIGHT. I'VE GOT TIME FOR A QUICK CUP OF TEA.
15:21

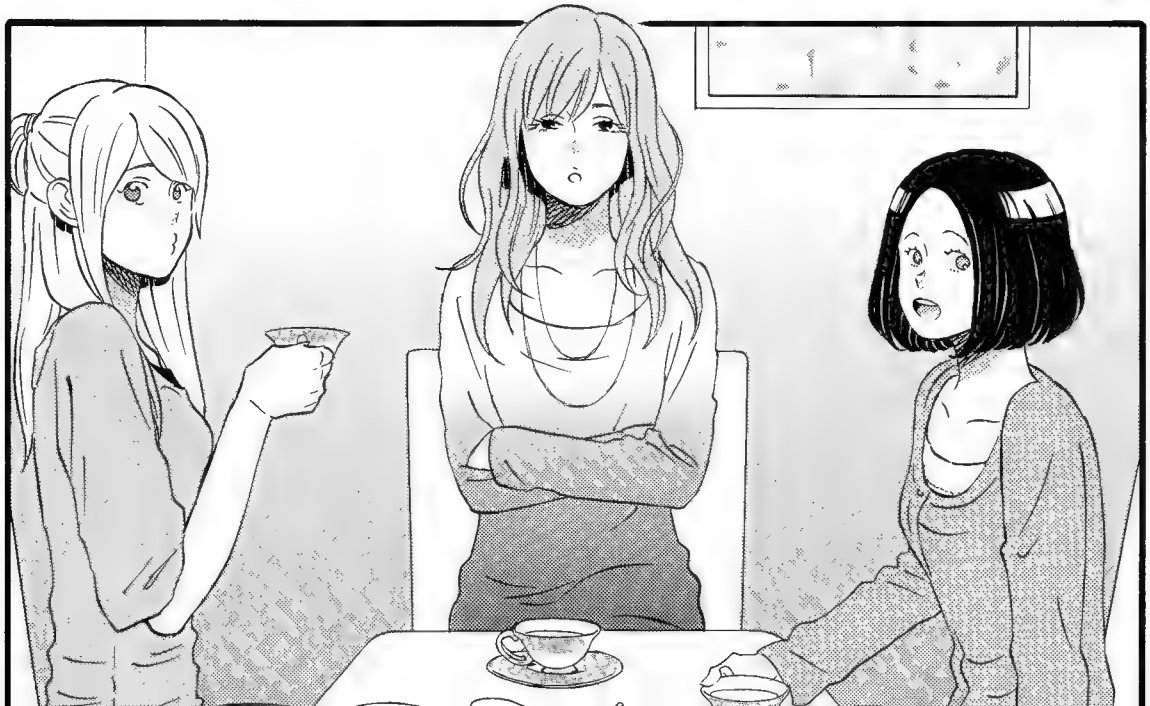
I DID THE LAUNDRY IN THE MORNING...
AND DINNER WILL BE YESTERDAY'S LEFTOVERS WITH TWO NEW SIDE-DISHES...

TABLE FOR ONE, SIR?
OH. NO, I'M MEETING UP WITH OTHER PEOPLE.
I SEE...

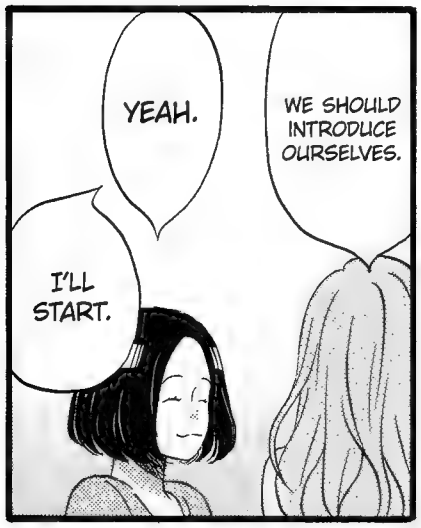
WELCOME!

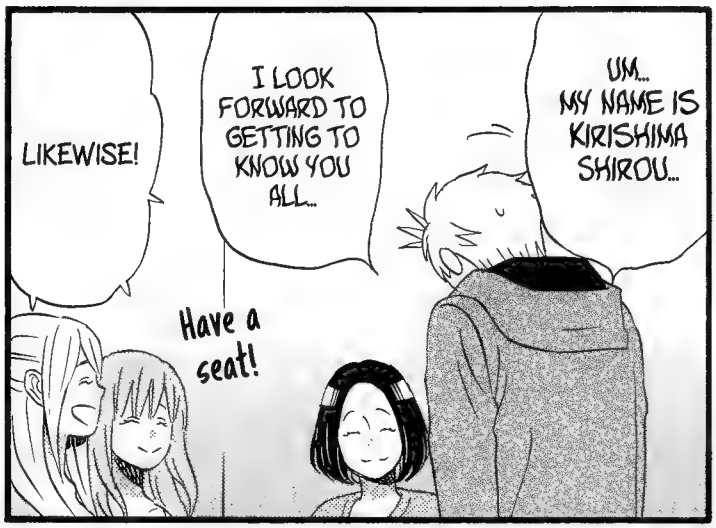
HELLO! IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.

THEY SHOULD BE OVER THERE. PLEASE GO AHEAD!

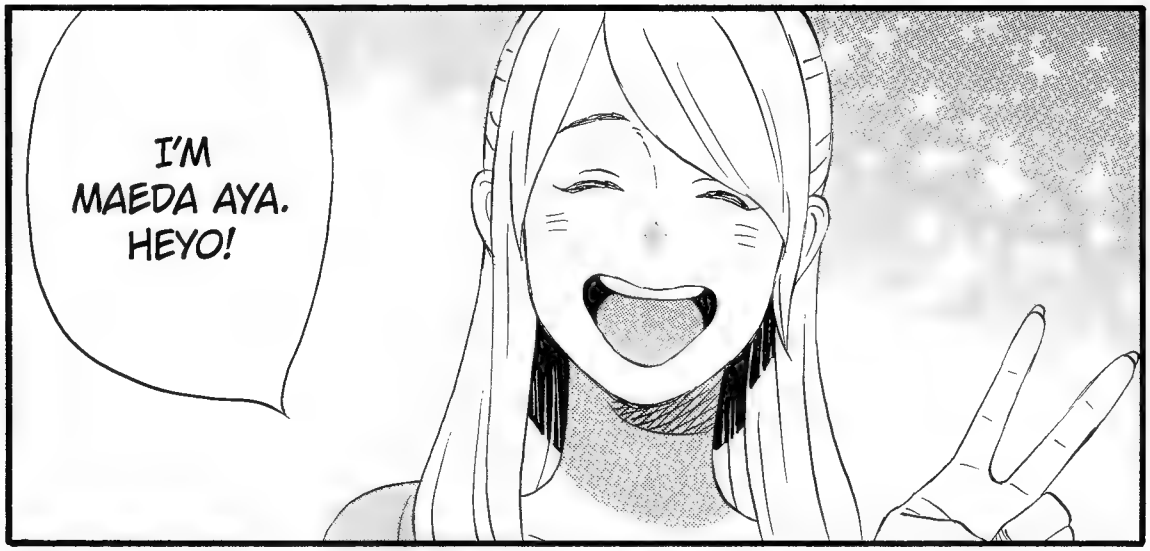


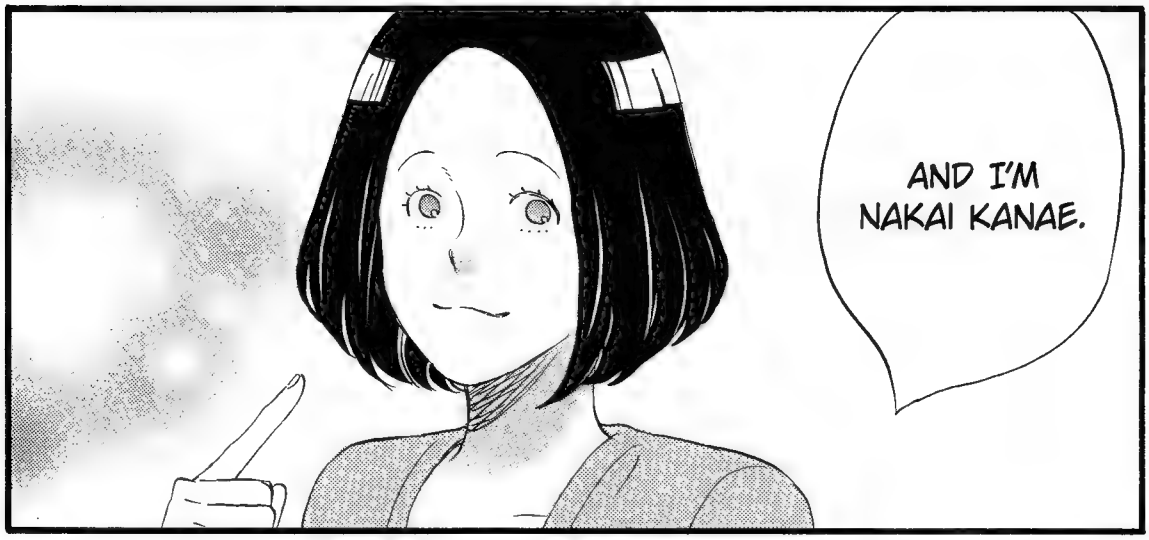
HUH...?
OH, GOSH! HE'S SO YOUNG! AND HIS SKIN IS SO SMOOTH!
Kya ha ha ha ha!
WHOAA! HE REALLY CAME!

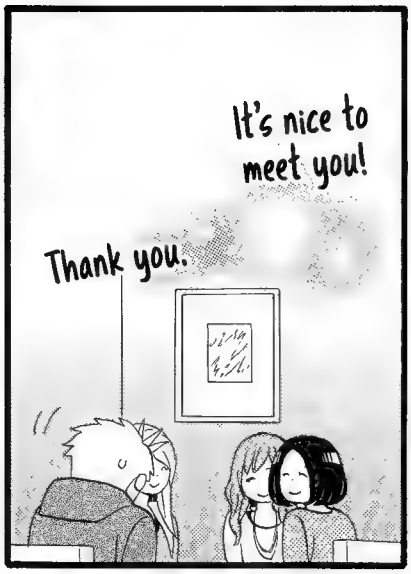

I'LL START.
YEAH.
WE SHOULD INTRODUCE OURSELVES.


LIKEWISE!
I LOOK FORWARD TO GETTING TO KNOW YOU ALL...
UM... MY NAME IS KIRISHIMA SHIROU...
Have a seat!

I'M MAKINO REIKO. IT'S A PLEASURE!


I'M MAEDA AYA. HEYO!


AND I'M NAKAI KANAE.

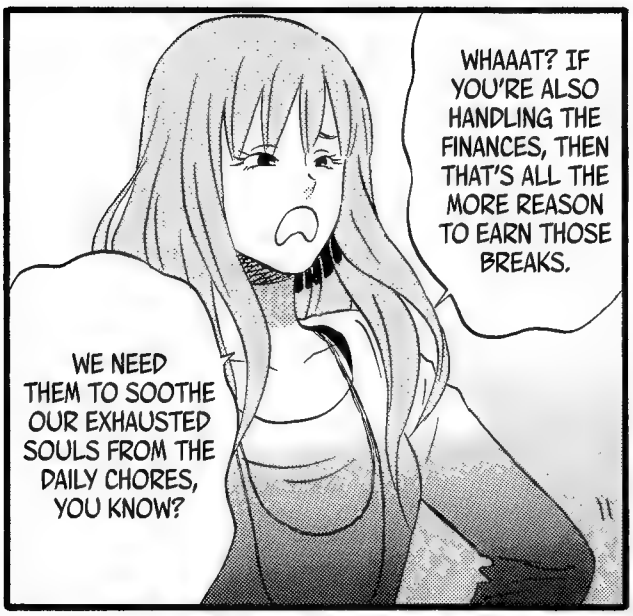

It's nice to meet you!
Thank you.

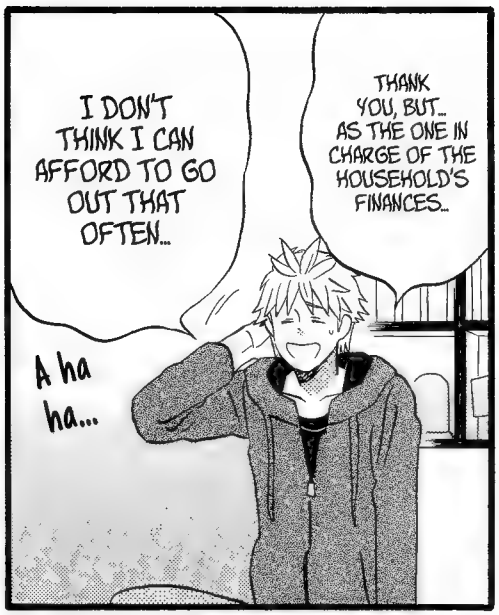
OH... YES.
We're the same!
SO...
YOU'RE A HOUSEHUSBAND, RIGHT, KIRISHIMA-KUN?

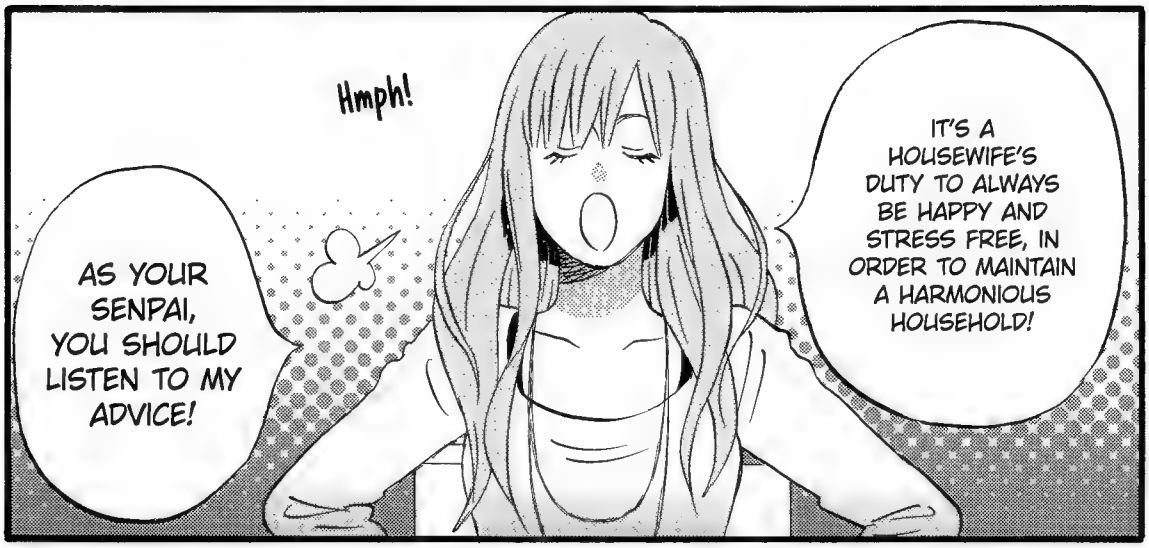
HERE'S HOPING WE GET ALONG WELL!
Y'SEE, WE ALWAYS HAVE TEA IN THE AFTERNOON!

HA HA HA! YOU'RE PRETTY INTERESTING!
THOUGH I'M STILL FAIRLY NEW TO THE JOB.

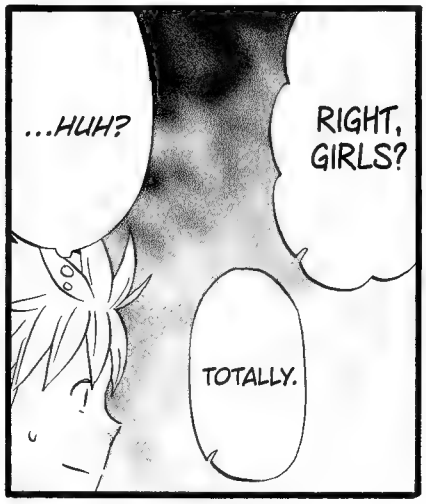
HUH...?
I KNOW SOME GOOD PLACES. YOU SHOULD JOIN US!
AND SOMETIMES WE EVEN GO OUT FOR LUNCH.

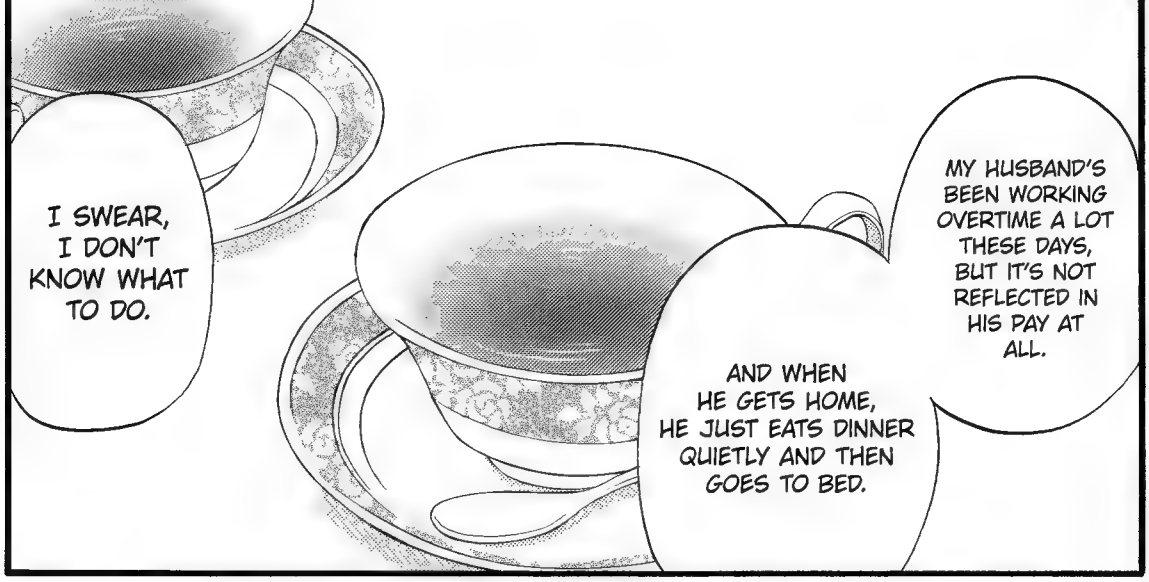

WHAAAT? IF YOU'RE ALSO HANDLING THE FINANCES, THEN THAT'S ALL THE MORE REASON TO EARN THOSE BREAKS.
WE NEED THEM TO SOOTHE OUR EXHAUSTED SOULS FROM THE DAILY CHORES, YOU KNOW?

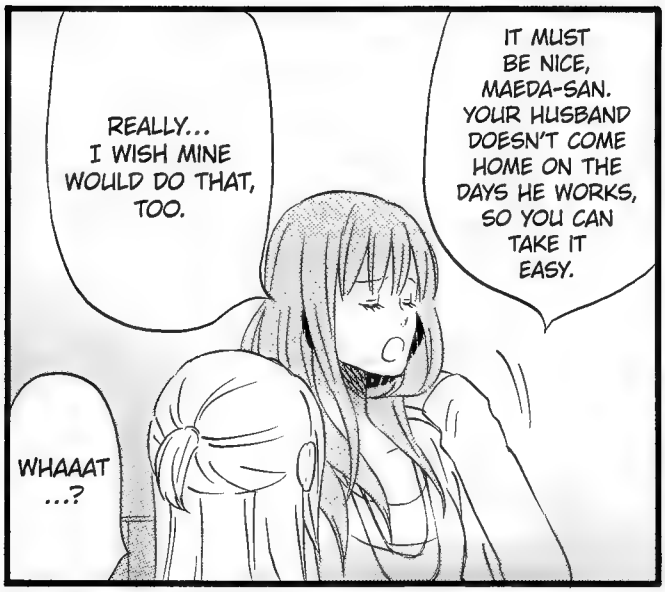

THANK YOU, BUT... AS THE ONE IN CHARGE OF THE HOUSEHOLD'S FINANCES...
I DON'T THINK I CAN AFFORD TO GO OUT THAT OFTEN...
A ha ha...

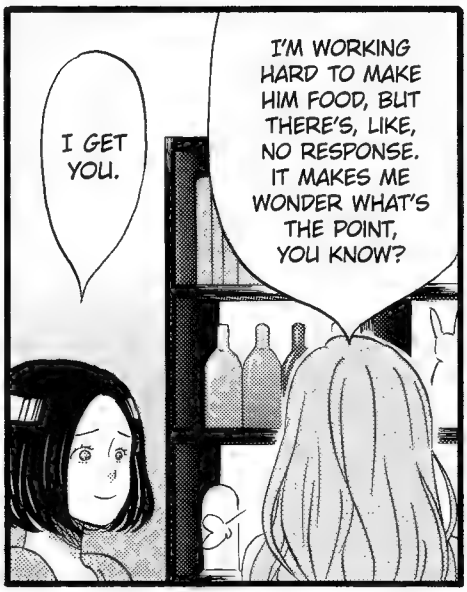

Hmph!
IT'S A HOUSEWIFE'S DUTY TO ALWAYS BE HAPPY AND STRESS FREE, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A HARMONIOUS HOUSEHOLD!
AS YOUR SENPAI, YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO MY ADVICE!

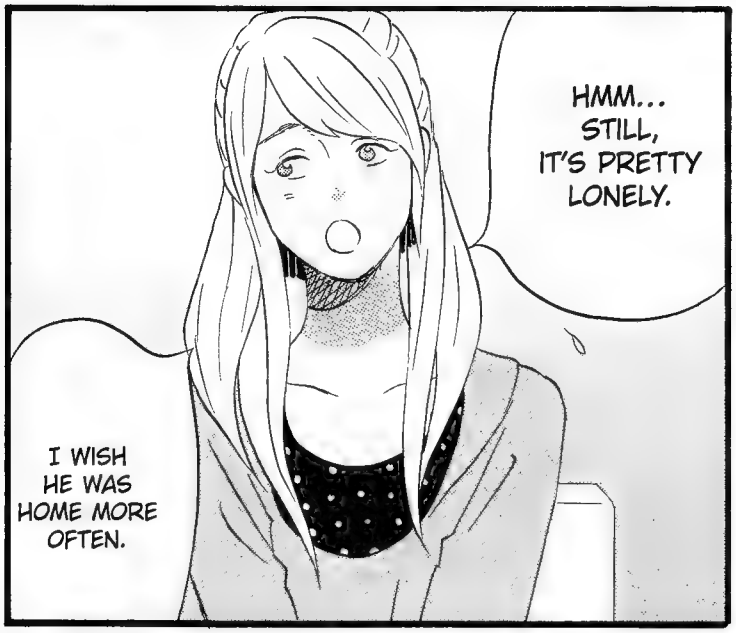
AFTER ALL, I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO MAKE DO WITH WHAT LITTLE MONEY WE HAVE.
I CAN'T DO MY BEST WITHOUT A REWARD.


RIGHT, GIRLS?
...HUH?
TOTALLY.

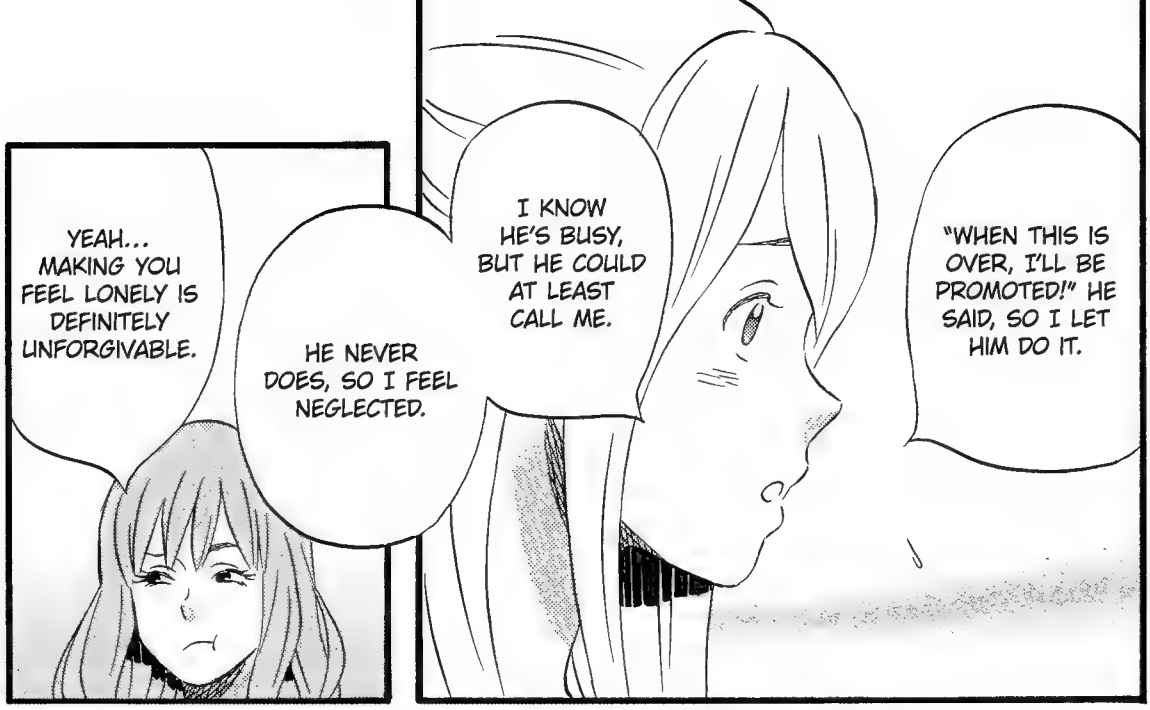

I SWEAR, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
MY HUSBAND'S BEEN WORKING OVERTIME A LOT THESE DAYS, BUT IT'S NOT REFLECTED IN HIS PAY AT ALL.
AND WHEN HE GETS HOME, HE JUST EATS DINNER QUIETLY AND THEN GOES TO BED.

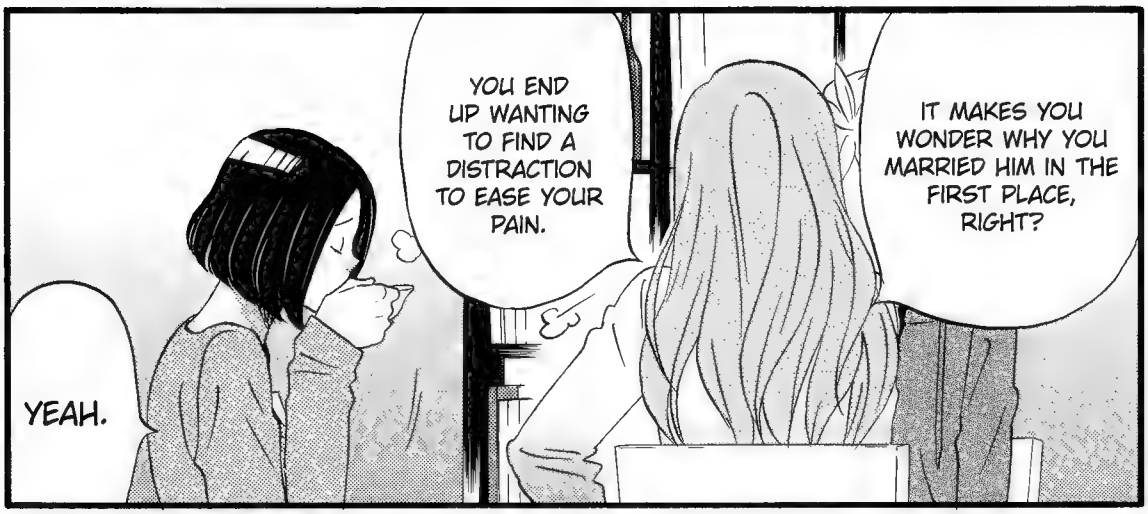

IT MUST BE NICE, MAEDA-SAN. YOUR HUSBAND DOESN'T COME HOME ON THE DAYS HE WORKS, SO YOU CAN TAKE IT EASY.
REALLY... I WISH MINE WOULD DO THAT, TOO.
WHAAAT ...?

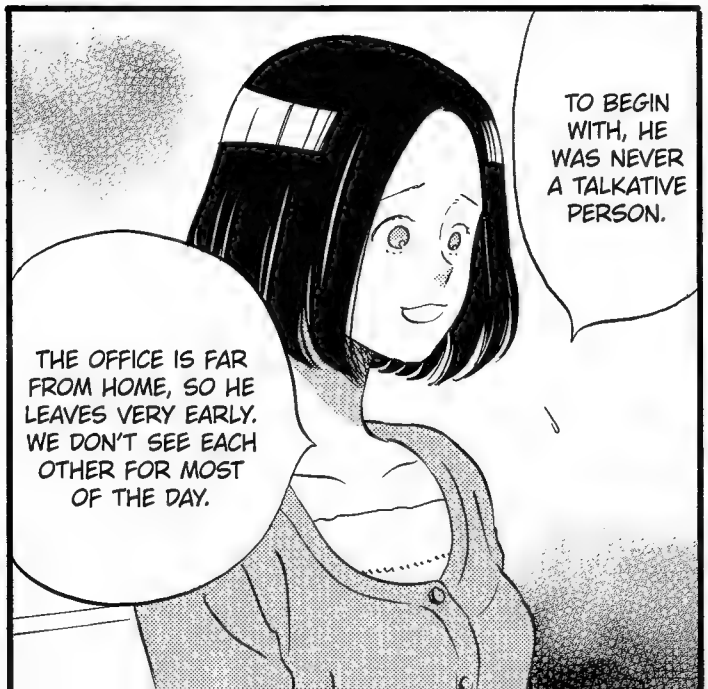

I'M WORKING HARD TO MAKE HIM FOOD, BUT THERE'S, LIKE, NO RESPONSE. IT MAKES ME WONDER WHAT'S THE POINT, YOU KNOW?
I GET YOU.

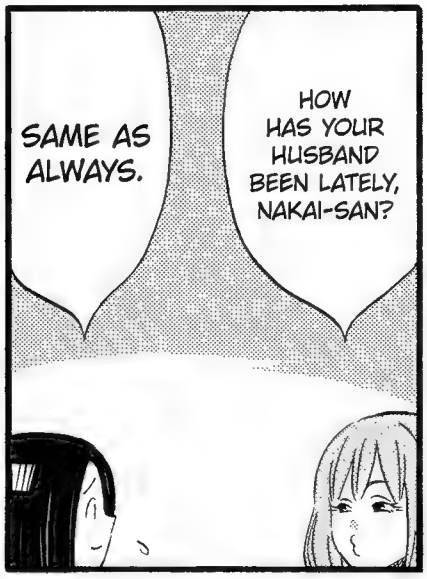

HMM... STILL, IT'S PRETTY LONELY.
I WISH HE WAS HOME MORE OFTEN.

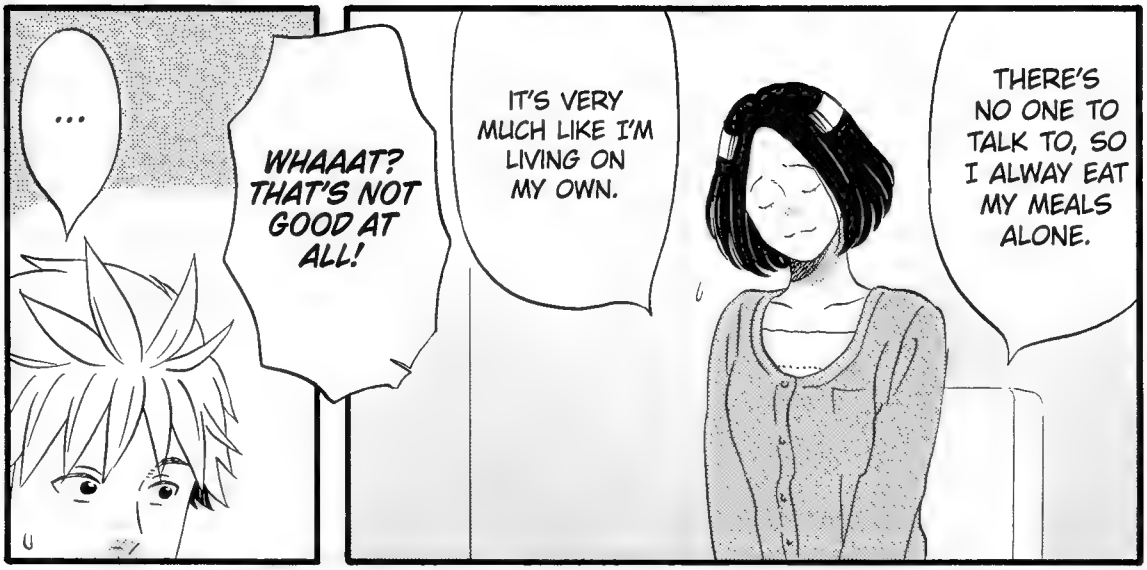
IT'S TOTALLY BORING, ACTUALLY... AND ON HIS DAYS OFF, HE JUST LOAFS AROUND ALL DAY. IT PISSES ME OFF, HA HA.

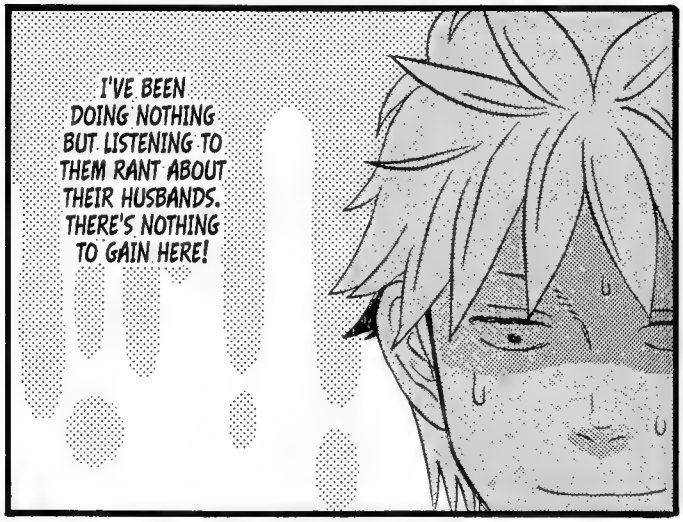

YEAH... MAKING YOU FEEL LONELY IS DEFINITELY UNFORGIVABLE.
HE NEVER DOES, SO I FEEL NEGLECTED.
I KNOW HE'S BUSY, BUT HE COULD AT LEAST CALL ME.
"WHEN THIS IS OVER, I'LL BE PROMOTED!" HE SAID, SO I LET HIM DO IT.


YEAH.
YOU END UP WANTING TO FIND A DISTRACTION TO EASE YOUR PAIN.
IT MAKES YOU WONDER WHY YOU MARRIED HIM IN THE FIRST PLACE, RIGHT?


THE OFFICE IS FAR FROM HOME, SO HE LEAVES VERY EARLY. WE DON'T SEE EACH OTHER FOR MOST OF THE DAY.
TO BEGIN WITH, HE WAS NEVER A TALKATIVE PERSON.


SAME AS ALWAYS.
HOW HAS YOUR HUSBAND BEEN LATELY, NAKAI-SAN?


...
WHAAAT? THAT'S NOT GOOD AT ALL!
IT'S VERY MUCH LIKE I'M LIVING ON MY OWN.
THERE'S NO ONE TO TALK TO, SO I ALWAY EAT MY MEALS ALONE.


I'VE BEEN DOING NOTHING BUT LISTENING TO THEM RANT ABOUT THEIR HUSBANDS. THERE'S NOTHING TO GAIN HERE!

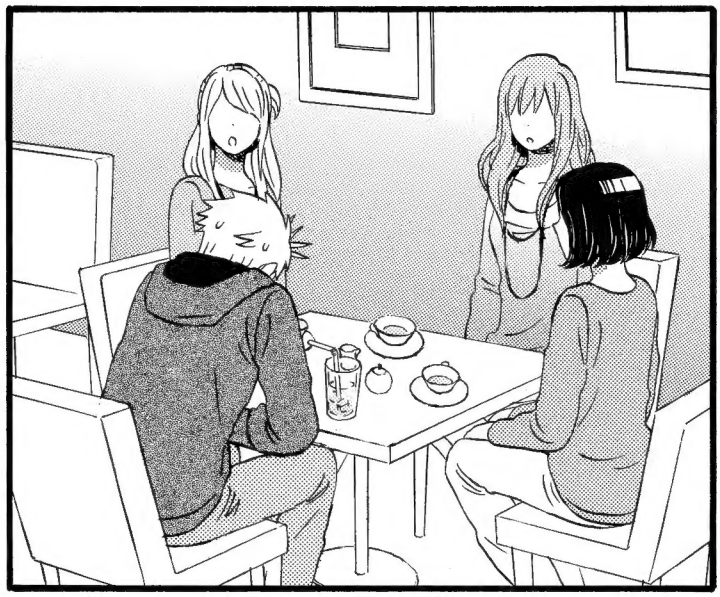
"THIS IS WHERE YOU EXCHANGE INFORMATION THAT HELPS YOU LEVEL UP AS A HOUSEHUSBAND!"
...OR SO I HAD EXCITEDLY THOUGHT.

Heh heh!
Ha ha ha!
WOW... HOUSEWIVES TRULY ARE IN A CLASS BY THEMSELVES...!
Heh heh heh!

BESIDES... IF THEY'RE FULL-TIME HOUSEWIVES, AREN'T THEIR HUSBANDS THE ONES FOOTING THE TEA AND LUNCH BILLS?
GRANTED, I DON'T THINK THEY ARE ALL LIKE THIS, BUT...

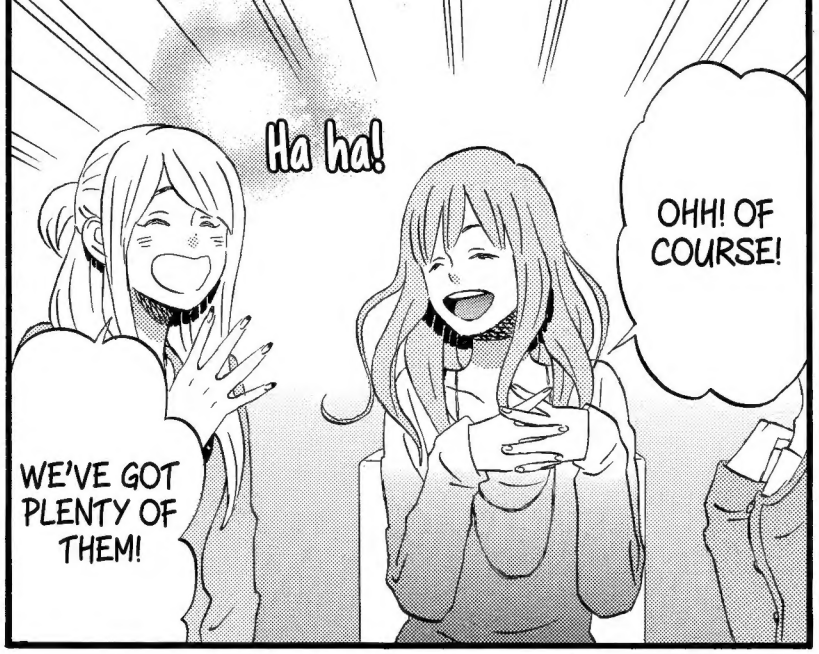
U-UM!
NOT GOOD. I'LL GO CRAZY IF I KEEP LISTENING TO THEM.
I'VE GOTTA CHANGE THE TOPIC!

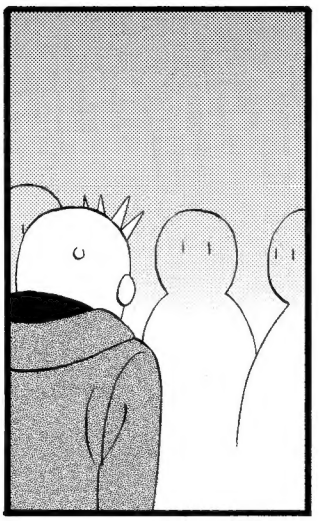
WELL...

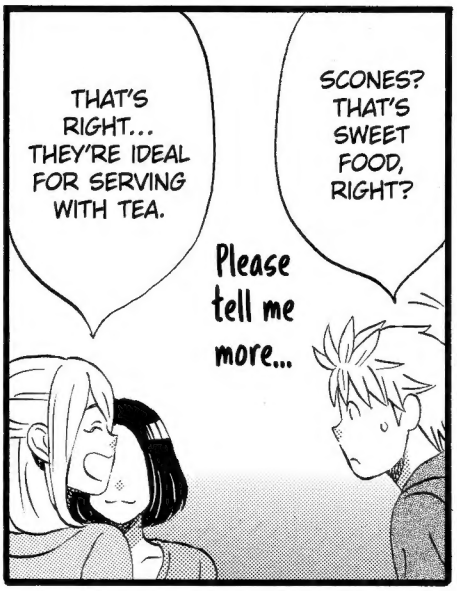


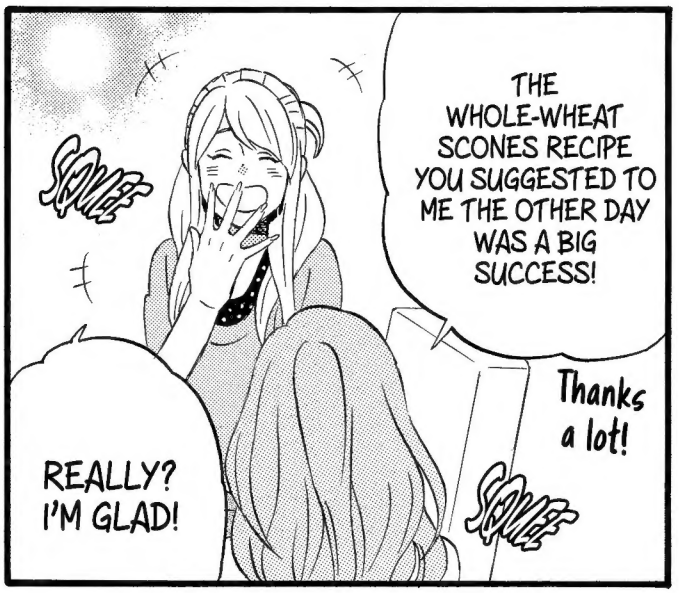
Ha ha...
ARE THERE ANY RECIPES YOU RECOMMEND...?

I... DON'T HAVE MUCH COOKING EXPERIENCE...
SO I WAS WONDERING ...


Ha ha!
OHH! OF COURSE!
WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF THEM!

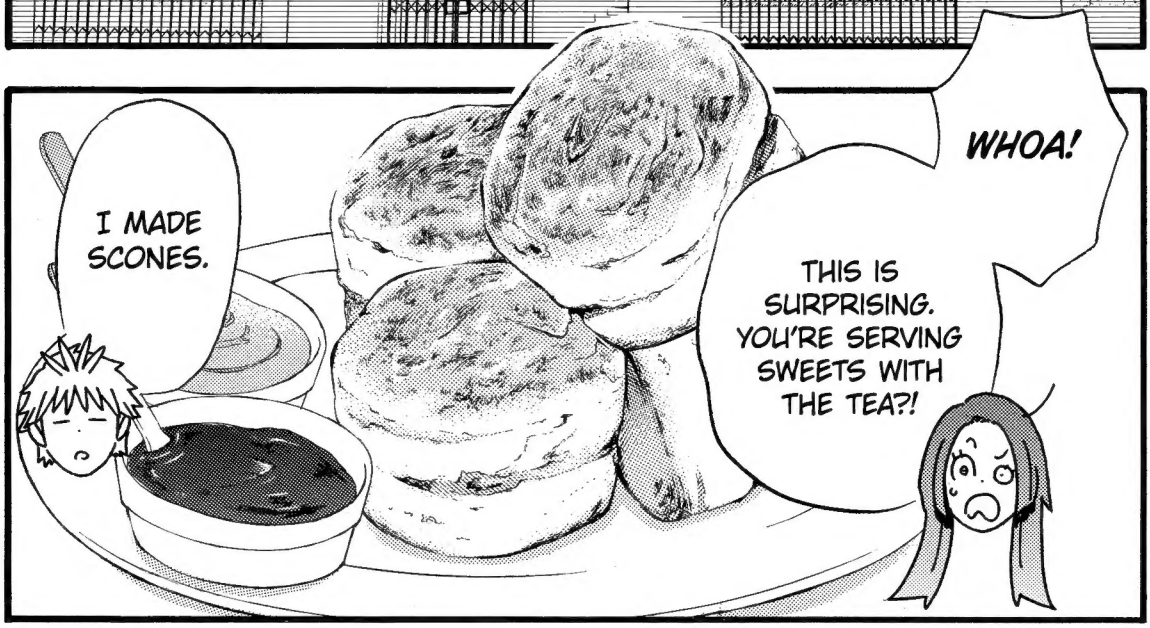


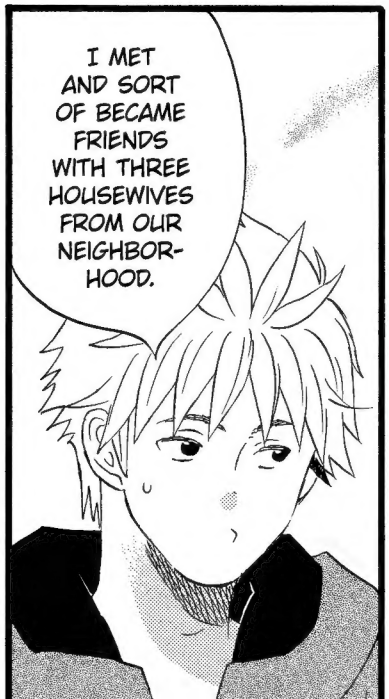

SCONES? THAT'S SWEET FOOD, RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT... THEY'RE IDEAL FOR SERVING WITH TEA.
Please tell me more...


THE WHOLE-WHEAT SCONES RECIPE YOU SUGGESTED TO ME THE OTHER DAY WAS A BIG SUCCESS!
Thanks a lot!
REALLY? I'M GLAD!

...
SWEETS ARE PRETTY FUN TO MAKE!

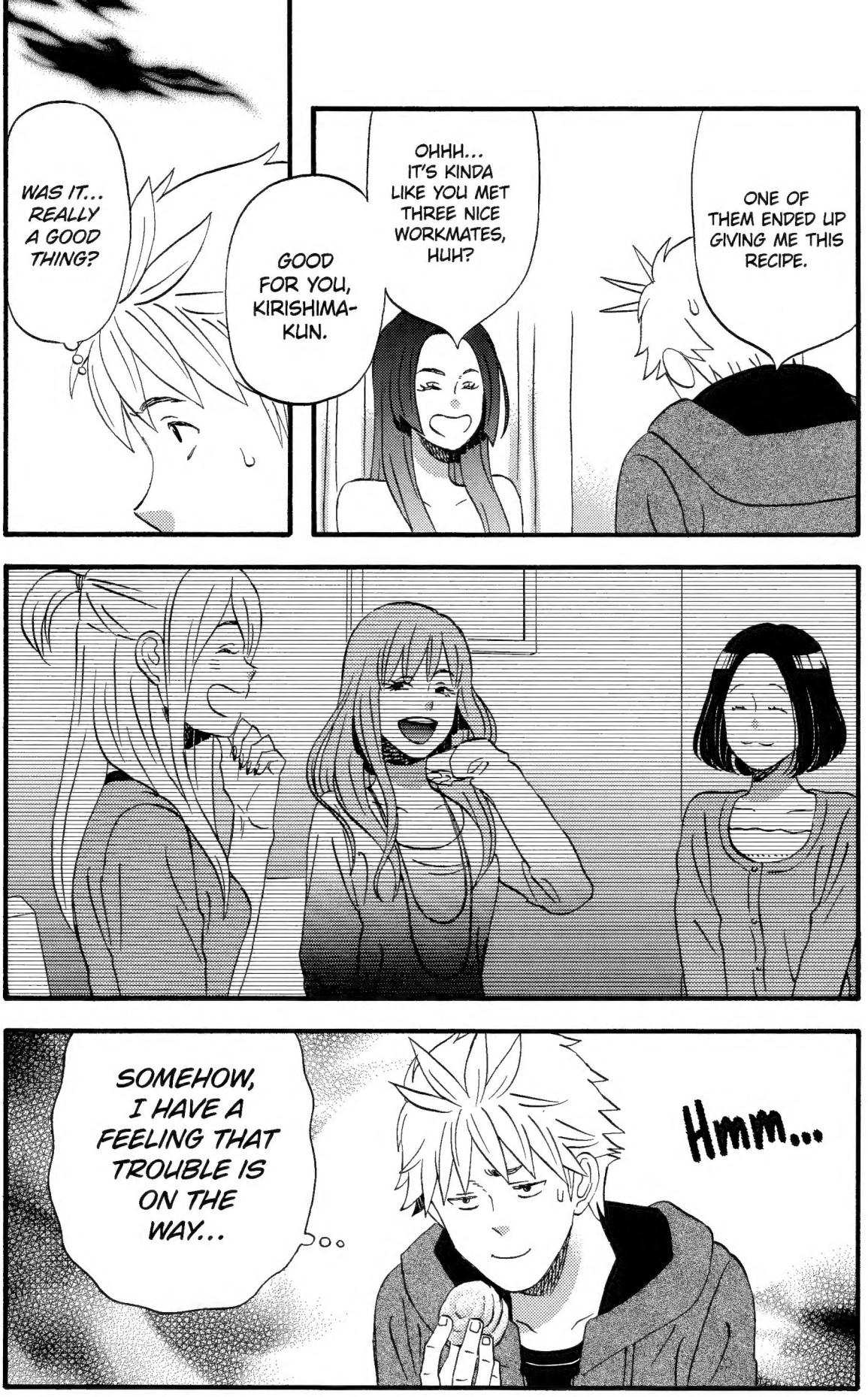
YOU SHOULD TRY IT! I'LL TELL YOU MY RECIPE!
IS THAT SO? I'VE NEVER MADE SWEETS BEFORE.


I MADE SCONES.
WHOA!
THIS IS SURPRISING. YOU'RE SERVING SWEETS WITH THE TEA?!


I MET AND SORT OF BECAME FRIENDS WITH THREE HOUSEWIVES FROM OUR NEIGHBOR-HOOD.

WELL...
DID YOU LOOK UP THIS RECIPE ONLINE?
THEY'RE DELICIOUS!

Munch


WAS IT... REALLY A GOOD THING?
GOOD FOR YOU, KIRISHIMA-KUN.
OHHH... IT'S KINDA LIKE YOU MET THREE NICE WORKMATES, HUH?
ONE OF THEM ENDED UP GIVING ME THIS RECIPE.
SOMEHOW, I HAVE A FEELING THAT TROUBLE IS ON THE WAY...
Hmm...